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This service is for general distribution of information and news to Sailors and Marines and their families, civilian employees, and retired members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. Further dissemination of this information is encouraged.

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USS ENTERPRISE Performs Navy's First At-Sea Teledentistry

In the Arabian Gulf--The Navy's first ever sea-to-shore teledentistry conference recently connected dentists half a world apart to assist a Sailor aboard forward-deployed USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65).

The shipboard dentists conferred face-to-face via video with specialists from the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda, MD.

The need to use teledentistry arose when USS ENTERPRISE'S dental department head, CDR John Aragon, DC, discovered a lesion on a Sailor's tongue during a routine dental exam. Not sure if it was benign or malignant, he referred the patient to the ship's oral and maxillofacial (face reconstruction) surgeon, LCDR David Bitonti, DC.

Bitonti used the dental department's teleconferencing equipment to connect with Bethesda to confer with oral pathologist, CAPT Doug Arendt, DC, and oral and maxillofacial surgeon, CDR Bud Fidler, DC, about the suspicious lesion.

With DT3 Jerome Simmons assisting, Bitonti used an intra-oral camera to give Bethesda specialists a close-up view of the lesion. As the images were transmitted,

Bethesda dentists analyzed the lesion in real time and also recorded the consult on a videotape for further analysis.

"They requested we remove a portion of the lesion and surrounding normal tissue and mail it back to Bethesda for them to examine under a microscope," said Bitonti.

Once the examination is complete, the Bethesda oral pathologists will e-mail back the results. Then, based on the diagnosis, ENTERPRISE dental personnel will either treat the Sailor on the ship or medevac him back to Bethesda for treatment.

"Before video teleconferencing, if we wanted a second opinion, we had to send the service member back to Bethesda," Bitonti said. "Now we can confer with specialists and, in many cases, treat the problem on the ship."

By JO2 Art Picard, USS ENTERPRISE

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"Deckplate Sickbay" Opens in Meridian, MS

Meridian, MS--Students and staff at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, MS, don't go far for health care these days, thanks to a "deckplate sickbay" that opened near where the Sailors and Marines study and work.

The sickbay opened 1 October near the Naval Technical Training Center (NTTC) and the Marine Aviation Training Support Group, where up to a thousand students train at a time.

With a staff of two -- either an independent duty corpsman or a physician's assistant, and a corpsman who is a specially-trained sick call screener -- the deckplate sickbay is a satellite of the larger Branch Medical Clinic (BMC) Meridian, where students and staff used to go for morning sick call. According to Project Manager LCDR Holly Bennett, NC, the sickbay saw 55 patients in its first week.

"The point of decentralizing our health care is to make it more accessible for our patients," said Bennett. "Most of them are students. It's hard for them to catch up when they miss class. Sometimes, when a patient is away from a very small, specialized class, the whole class closes down to wait for him."

The sickbay is open from 7 to 9 a.m. weekdays. Patients come to the sickbay, get an appointment time, and then are able to go back to class or work. A runner is assigned to the sickbay as well to inform patients if the appointments are running early or late. The time away from class or work is generally only the length of the appointment, about 15 minutes.

There is also a small pharmacy at the deckplate sickbay that offers some of the more commonly prescribes medications to save Sailors and Marines trips to the larger branch clinic.

"The staff at NTTC is elated," said Bennett. "This really keeps people in class."

Plans are in the works for another deckplate sickbay

near two other activities, Training Wing One and NAS Meridian's operations department.
By HMCS(FMF) Mark A. Fox, BMC Meridian, MS

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San Diego Teaches Teens To Make Healthy Choices

San Diego--Teens ages 13 to 18 learned how to make healthy choices for a healthier life recently at Naval Medical Center (NMC) San Diego's "Healthy Choices for Better Lifestyle" Saturday day camp.

The multidisciplinary healthy choices program was developed by staff members from the adolescent clinic, nutrition department, and fitness office. The health education department will be responsible for the week-to-week operation of the eight week program.

The program was begun in response to a trend program planners would like to see reversed.

"We were seeing a significant number of overweight adolescents in our clinic so we were motivated by the need for a weight reduction program designed specifically for teenagers," said LCDR Deborah Conway, coordinator for the program.

Parents are encouraged to attend the program with their teenagers. "We teach the parents ways to support their children's efforts to lose weight and become more active," Conway continued. "We want to avoid overemphasizing dieting and rapid or instant weight loss, and instead, focus on changing unhealthy habits for long term results."

Topics include general nutrition and how to eat sensibly in fast food restaurants, fitness and aerobic exercise, building and nurturing self esteem, and recognizing and altering unhealthy family lifestyle patterns. Last week's guest instructor was PBS chef and cookbook author, Arlyn Hackett, who showed the teens that low calorie, low-fat meals can be as tasty and satisfying as junk food.

By Pat Kelly, NMC San Diego

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Sailor Meets New Daughter Via Telemedicine

Portsmouth, VA--The newborn baby girl was behaving perfectly, resting peacefully in her mother's arms. The mother, RM3 Sherry Mills, beamed at her husband, RMC Dalton Mills, and said, "Isn't she beautiful?"

Similar scenes have been repeated millions of times in Navy families, but what makes this one unique is that RMC Mills is thousands of miles away aboard USS ENTERPRISE and is seeing his daughter for the very first time via the satellite, computer and video technology called telemedicine.

Telemedicine uses video teleconferencing (VTC) technology to allow health care providers in remote areas to consult with larger facilities without traveling. In the Navy, telemedicine on board carriers like USS ENTERPRISE

allows ship's physicians to maintain links with shore-based medical centers. And on USS ENTERPRISE, telemedicine is now being used for what the technicians at Naval Medical Center (NMC), Portsmouth and aboard USS ENTERPRISE are calling "telebaby bonding."

RM3 Mills had her third child, Brittany Ann Cameron Mills, on 27 September at Portsmouth. On 3 October, just before she was discharged, a VTC was arranged so that Brittany could "meet" her father. With 76 babies born to ENTERPRISE Sailors since the deployment began, this initiative is immensely popular with both the carrier and the hospital.

A crowd gathered around the tiny room in radiology where the VTC was taking place. Local media, technicians, nurses, physicians, and excited onlookers grinned as they watched RM3 Mills, now speaking into the telephone handset for privacy, tell her husband all about Brittany. The Mills' two older children, Megan, age 4, and Jonathan, 17 months, were saying hello to Dad when a corpsman stuck his head into the hallway where the onlookers stood. "Is this where the guy on the ship is getting to see his baby?" His face lit up when this fact was confirmed, and he exulted, "This is so awesome!" before getting back to work.

NMC Portsmouth and USS ENTERPRISE hopes that the telebaby bonding is the first of many such meetings. As the system's operation is smoothed out, more and more Sailors can expect to see their newborn children before the ship pulls back into its homeport.

By LT Merritt Allen, NMC Portsmouth, VA

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"Senior Fit Force 2000" Keeps Seniors Healthy

Bethesda, MD--"Senior Fit Force 2000," a special health fair for seniors over 55, was held at National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda, MD, on Tuesday, 8 October.

"The purpose of the event was to help people in this particular age group identify their health risks, learn prevention methods, and gain overall knowledge and skill," said Nancy Hart, head of health education at NNMC Bethesda.

The fair included displays and presentations on tai chi, osteoporosis, fitness, nutrition, and stress management. Blood pressure, cholesterol and vision screening were also available.

The event, open to all Department of Defense health care beneficiaries who are 55 or older, drew more than 200 seniors.

The Wellness Council of NNMC Bethesda sponsors the Senior Fit Force 2000 annually. It also sponsors a similar fair, Fit Force 2000, for health care beneficiaries ages 18 and above.

By LT La'Tonya Harris, NNMC Bethesda

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Navy Study Targets Female Recruit Smokers

Researchers from the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego are trying to find a way to cut tobacco use among female Navy recruits, and, once they've reduced their usage, keep off it.

Dubbed Operation Stay Quit (OSQ), the study is funded by the Defense women's Health Research Program as part of an effort to address health issues specific to women in the service.

The study encourages all the female recruits at Recruit Training Command at Great Lakes, IL, who are smokers to participate.

The smokers are divided into three groups. One group receives counseling via a toll-free telephone number. The counselor helps the smoker develop a personalized plan of attack to give up smoking for good, and also follows up with support calls over a 12-month period.

A second group is mailed educational and motivational information packets periodically over a 12-month period.

The last group acts as a control. No material or counseling is provided to this group.

"Boot camp is a rare environment," said Linda Hervig, one of the researchers at NHRC San Diego. "Recruits aren't allowed to smoke for eight weeks. For most (smokers) it's a cold turkey 'quit.'"

Since the boot camp gives women recruits a running start on reducing their tobacco use, Hervig and her fellow researchers want to find out which of the methods works best to help women Sailors 'stay quit.'

The three year study is a collaboration between San Diego State University, the University of California-San Diego, and NRHC San Diego.

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Electronic School House Network Offers Health Courses

Many Navy Medicine professionals can sharpen their skills with specialized training without leaving their base, thanks to the Chief of Naval Education and Training's Electronic Schoolhouse Network (CESN).

The CESN offers courses through video teleconferencing, an electronic system that links various sites throughout the country and allows students to see and speak to the instructor and other students via a television monitor.

Courses include:

- Healthy Lifestyles Forum, a four hour program that offers holiday safety campaign resources, health and physical readiness programs update, a review of the new Navy nutrition guide, and information about Port Hueneme's (CA) popular "Bee Fit" program. It will be offered on Monday, 25 November from 12-4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). Contact LT Leslie Cox, MSC, at (703) 695-4058, DSN 225-4058 for more information.

- Suicide Prevention Training for Trainers, a four hour program that offers an overview of suicide prevention policies and updated information on demographics. It will

be offered Tuesday, 26 November 11-3 p.m. EST; and Monday, 2 December 8 a.m.-12 p.m. EST. Contact LCDR Paul Anjeski, MSC, at (703) 614-5747, DSN 224-5747 for more information.

- Navy Exercise Leader Course, a three day program that certifies any E-5 and above as a command fitness coordinator. It will be offered Tuesday-Thursday, 15-17 October from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST and Monday-Wednesday, 21-23 October from 12-9 p.m. EST. Contact HM2 Smith at (703) 614-5742, DSN 224-5742.

- Exceptional Family Program, a three and a half hour program that provides basic information on services for exceptional family members and their families. It will be offered Wednesday, 18 December from 12-4 p.m. EST. Contact Anne Allen at (703) 693-3308, DSN 223-3308 for more information.

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Corpsman Train With Local EMTs

Key West, FL--Branch Medical Clinic (BMC) Key West and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel in Monroe County, FL, have established an award winning, military-civilian cross training program that saves money and improves the skills of personnel in both agencies.

According to Monroe County officials, it is the first local government to reach such an agreement for shared training and education with the Navy.

Navy corpsmen receive training from county instructor-qualified paramedics, allowing the paramedics to exercise their instructor skills. The Navy, in turn, provides the student corpsmen and instruction on how the BMC operates. Both agencies earn credits toward keeping up in their certifications at virtually no cost to the government.

"The paramedics are good instructors. We go out in the civilian community and learn more than we could on base. It gives us a chance to use the stuff we have been trained to do. I've participated in two codes (life-threatening situations) since I've gone out with them," said HM2 Doug Kiser, one of the corpsmen participating in the training.

The National Association of Counties (NACO) awarded Monroe County the 1996 Achievement Award last month for this innovative program. The county chose to accept the award at the BMC so that clinic staff could participate in the ceremony.

By Bob Hines, Naval Hospital Pensacola, FL

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TRICARE Questions? We've Got Answers

TRICARE Service Centers provide information about military health care and TRICARE. There's a TRICARE Service Center near most military health care facilities and also other locations where there is a large military population. These centers are staffed with TRICARE service representatives who can assist you in your choice of the TRICARE option that best suits you and your family's needs.

Additionally, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery now has a dedicated e-mail address to send in your questions and get a response via MEDNEWS. The e-mail address is TRICARE@BMS200.MED.NAVY. MIL.

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Healthwatch: Sneak Fruits and Vegetables Into Kid's Meals

Health experts recommend we eat five servings of fruits and vegetables. This can be tough when you're trying to get youngsters to eat right. Whether you have toddlers or teens, it's not uncommon for noses to be turned up when it comes to eating fruits and vegetables.

Here are some hints on getting more fruits and vegetables into their diet without accompanying complaints. Hide Them in the Main Dish

- Mix finely chopped or mashed cooked vegetables into meatloaf, meatballs, or other ground meat dishes.
- Stuff chicken or other entrees with a combination of stuffing and finely chopped vegetables or fruits.
- Add finely chopped vegetables, such as carrots, zucchini, celery, or parsnips, to spaghetti sauce or lasagna.

Make Them Special

- Mix juice concentrate with sparkling water for a juice spritzer.
- Mix juice concentrate with milk for a milk punch.
- Cut vegetables into interesting shapes, such as crinkle cut potatoes or carrots, and use different seasonings, like nutmeg.
- Some vegetables may be more acceptable to kids over four years old if they are served raw, especially when cut in easy to handle pieces like carrots cut at an angle.

Combine Them With the Familiar

- Add grated or finely chopped (preferably unidentifiable) vegetables to soups or stews that are already familiar to your kids.
- Add only one new item at a time to the menu.
- Set a good example by expanding your culinary horizons.

Make Them Fun!

- Prepare a small assortment of fresh or cooked fruits and vegetables for your children and some of their friends to taste.
- Grow one or two vegetables in a container garden or in the yard for your children to watch and taste.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact Jan Davis at e-mail address nmc0jkd@bms200.med.navy.mil, telephone 202/762-3223 (DSN 762-3223), or fax 202/762-3224.

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